

PRESS RELEASE

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Hawaii Marine Algae Group – Alien Algae Research and Removal Project

Timothy R. E. Keeney, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, will present the award at a ceremony on October 11, 2003, following an alien algae clean-up. Mr. Keeney and the recipients will be joined by representatives of the Coastal America partnership including Director Virginia K. Tippie.

Each award recipient will receive a letter of congratulations from President Bush stating, “The partnership you forged has brought together Federal agencies, the State of Hawaii, environmental organizations, and community groups in a collaborative effort to remove over 30 tons of alien algae from the Waikiki Marine Life Conservation District to protect the coral reef ecosystem. My Administration strongly supports such efforts to bring together collective resources to meet common goals and better our environment.”

To recognize outstanding partnership efforts, Coastal America established a national awards program in 1997. Nine projects were selected to receive the 2003 award.

Alien algae species introduced to the Hawaiian Islands during the last 30-50 years have become invasive and now directly threaten Hawaii’s coastal ecosystems. University of Hawai’i scientists during the past three years researched the scale and potential mitigation measures for the problem through field surveys and studies of alien algal growth, reproduction, physiological tolerances, herbivore preferences, removal methods, and algal re-growth potential. Working with community groups, the Hawaii Marine Algae Group is conducting on-going alien algae clean-ups at the Waikiki Marine Life Conservation District reef fronting the Waikiki Aquarium. In the seven alien algae clean-ups at the Waikiki MLCD to date, over 30 tons of alien algae biomass were removed from the reef and recycled. In addition to developing and implementing management protocols, community and political awareness has been increased via coverage by newspapers, TV news, educational, NGO and federal institution newsletters. The project is moving to a larger scale with the use of mechanized removal systems. In addition to the University of Hawaii, team members include: The Nature Conservancy, the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Hawaii Coral Reef Initiative, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, National Park Service, Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, Hawaii Reef Check, Island Divers Hawaii, Hawaiian Earth Products, Ltd and Hilton Hawaiian Village.

The Coastal America Partnership was established in 1992 to protect, preserve and restore our coastal watersheds by integrating federal actions with state and local government and non-governmental efforts. The federal partners include the Departments of Agriculture, Air Force, Army, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Navy, State, Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Executive Office of the President. Through multi-agency teams, the partnership process enables national policy issues to be identified and resolved, regional plans and strategies to be developed, and local projects to be implemented.

List of Awardees:

Cindy Hunter, Ph.D., Waikiki Aquarium, University of Hawai'i
Celia Smith, Ph.D., Botany Department, University of Hawai'i
Scott Atkinson, The Nature Conservancy - Hawai'i
Eric Co, The Nature Conservancy - Hawai'i
Isabella Abbott, Ph.D., Botany Department, University of Hawai'i
Dawn Adams, Biology Department, University of Hawai'i
Kimberly Peyton, Botany Department, University of Hawai'i
Kanekoa Shultz, Botany Department, University of Hawai'i
Jennifer Smith, Botany Department, University of Hawai'i
Cheryl Squair, Botany Department, University of Hawai'i
Rebecca Most, Waikiki Aquarium, University of Hawai'i
Thomas Sauvage, Waikiki Aquarium, University of Hawai'i
Eric Conklin, Zoology Department, University of Hawai'i
David Pence, EHSO-Diving Safety Program, Univ. of Hawai'i
Kevin Foster, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Pacific Islands Reg.
Michael P. Hamnett, Ph.D., Hawai'i Coral Reef Initiative – Research Program, NOAA
Kristine Davidson, Hawai'i Coral Reef Initiative - Research Program, NOAA
Bill Thomas, NOAA - Pacific Services Center
Kaliko Thomas, Future Generation
Wendy Wiltse, Ph.D., EPA - Pacific Islands Contact Office
Larry Basch, Ph.D., National Park Service, Pacific Islands Coral Reef Program
William Devick, Ph.D, Hawaii Dept of Land and Natural Resources, Div of Aquatic Resources
David Gulko, Hawaii Dept of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Aquatic Resources
Randy Honebrink, Hawaii Dept of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Aquatic Resources
Athline Clark, Hawaii Dept of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Aquatic Resources
David Raney, Hawai'i Reef Check
Matthew Zimmerman, Ph.D., Island Divers Hawai'i - Hawai'i Reef Check